Strengthening Science and Technology Infrastructure

2875. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: .Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our science and technology infrastructure is not up to the mark;

(b) if so, the main hurdles responsible therefor; and

(c) the details of steps Government propose to take to strengthen science and technology infrastructure in universities and related institutions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAW AT): (a) to (c) In comparison with other developing countries India has a highly developed science and technology infrastructure.

There are many centres of excellence in various fields which can compare with the best in the world. The Government has over the last five decades made substantial investments in providing high quality infrastructure. However, some inadequacies do exit in the science & technologies infrastructure in Universities and other institutions of higher learning. To meet this gap the Government has recently initiated a new Scheme called the "Fund for improvement of S&T infrastructure in Universities and higher educational institutions (FIST)" Over 200 Departments in universities & related institutions have so far been identified for support in strengthening their infrastructural facilities.

Privatization of SAIL

2876. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that SAIL is on the way to privatization;

(b) if so, the reasons for privatizing it;

(c) what would be the fate «f the .employees; and

(d) what is the status of fertilizer plant of Rourkela Steel *f* lant?